

I understand
that there is
an unconscious,
or not conscious,
drive.
But your body
is performed.
There is a format
— you are
the format.

Reflexivity in the context of choreographic practice MP 3 /

three choreographers, a dramaturge and a philosopher in discussion

The MP3 mini-conference was organized on the 5th April 2003 at the Theaterschool by Dance Unlimited Amsterdam. It took place in the context of the theory curriculum for which a key line of enquiry was what might constitute practice-based research. For the mini-conference this enquiry was formulated as “what is reflexivity in the context of choreographic practice?”

Three choreographers, Thomas Lehmen, Raimund Hoghe and Vincent Dunoyer, a dramaturge/ writer, Marianne van Kerkhoven, and a philosopher, Henk Oosterling, were invited to come to Amsterdam to take part in a daylong discussion related to this theme.

The format of the day was organised somewhat unconventionally for a conference by placing tables in the centre of the space around which the five discussants were seated and invited to engage each other directly for three discussion sessions each lasting approximately 1.5 hours. Each of these sessions focused on the work of one of the three choreographers who had arrived prepared to make a proposal related to the theme through a combination of showing and speaking. An invited audience of approximately 35 people was arranged in a semi-circle around the discussants and questions were collected from them at the close of each session. A final fourth session was arranged as an open discussion involving the audience. Scott deLahunta acted as facilitator for the day.

The following is a selection of texts from the transcripts that were made of the day beginning with opening statements from each of the five discussants.

Opening Statements

TL / A question that keeps running in my head all the time is what is reflected in a theatre and what kind of mind is reflected in the theatre. Which social field is able to reflect anything in a theatre? This is something which I am busy with in my work. It's a very simple but for me also a very relevant question, because theatre can reflect something in a critical or intelligent way. And my experience in showing this to so-called 'stupid people' is that they're not that stupid at all and that they can understand everything. It just depends on the way you show it.

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HO / To open up the field for the talk I'll just give a short impression about my specific point of view on what reflexivity is. Being a philosopher, I seem to be predestined to give a good account of what reflexivity is. I think reflexivity is always medium specific. Nevertheless, philosophers always have this universalistic approach of getting or possessing or giving the idea that they have the final word about reflexivity. I want to see whether specific forms of reflexivity exist in different art forms and what the interaction between those reflexivities eventually gives us. So, when there is a theatrical or a dramatic reflexivity, how do we communicate this reflexivity once we do not acknowledge the universal power of talking and thinking. That counts for dance and it counts for literature in another sense, and for architecture, and for design. We'll probably focus on the performing arts, but one of the interesting things for me, for instance, is what is the relationship between architecture and dance, once you talk about bodies.

MK / If you see it in a historical way, there is another attitude towards theory in dance now, than there was ten years ago. What I want to reflect on is what theory means in your practice, in your life. For me theory is the fact that you do something, you think about it, and starting from these reflections you do a new thing. So you reinvest your thoughts into a new kind of practice and you always have to adjust your thoughts to what happens, to see if it is right, or if you find out that it is wrong then you have to change your ideas. I have one big question that for me has to do with the movements between theory and practice. I think theory has a more direct way of going to the things, whereas in artistic practice you always make all kinds of movement around something. It's a more indirect way. There is also the movement of inside and outside. We use the word research - we take this from the scientific world. Research means that you put yourself in a room, you study, you close off from the world around you. But when you are an artist, you have to meet an audience. You have to communicate what you have found to an outside world. You have this movement of constantly going back to the rehearsal room to think, to try things out and going out to an audience. We live in a time where we are constantly urged – you have to bring things to a large audience. It is the commercial world that is pushing in our back. I think we really have to be very careful in finding a way to communicate research to a larger audience. I think there are very good examples of it. As you see in the performance of *The Show Must Go On* by Jérôme Bell, there is real thinking behind what he is doing but it is a show that is really open to a large audience. There is perhaps another reflection that I made when seeing *Schreibstück* of Lehmen, it reminds me of the scores that for instance Mauricio Kagel wrote down, how his music had to be performed on stage. But is there not a problem in how to write it down, how to communicate it to the people you are going to work with? And writing down means the first step in fixing something. How is working from a concept and working from a kind of work in progress or improvisation – how do these two things come together?

VD / As a choreographer and performer I am used to ask questions within my own practice, my own work. Somehow my own pieces and my own work reflect my own questions about what I'm doing as a performer/choreographer, and also in terms of being the audience and watching something. It's quite awkward for me to be part of this gathering, like discussing theory even bringing up questions now...all these questions about theory, talking about dance, and doing dance, and just performing and creating a dance work. How can language and theory reflect and connect with what we are actually doing. For me it's quite strange to...I mean I'm interested and curious to see what is going to happen. But to be around this table, and to discuss about dance... What are we really doing now? It's a very important question.

RH / For me information is important and therefore I would like to tell the relation I have to the people here. You don't know how we know each other. For example, maybe I'll start with Marianne van Kerkhoven. We know each other from the Kaaitheater. Because she works there, she knows my work, and we know each other for a couple of years. Thomas Lehmen I met in the café from Kaaitheater and yesterday - so I don't have a long relation. But with Vincent Dunoyer, we did a piece together and I saw his pieces, we met two years ago. I met Henk Oosterling yesterday for the first time. Within this group there are different relations. In the audience, I know some people, Pieter Scholten and Emio Greco and Hooman Sharifi. If they ask something I know them. And other people I don't know. Information is very important for me. Especially at this time, because we get very selective information. That's another point in this political situation now, how you can do dance performances. I cannot separate myself to say, I do my work thinking about the world around...

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One strong experience was September 11 when some performances were cancelled. We were at the same festival, Vincent and I, and on the 12th, he performed a solo and it was very much connected to this. A lot of people said, "no, we can't do a dance performance". I think you can if you are clear about what you are doing. There is always a war in the world and you can't stop completely. I think it's important not to stop. When I see some images on television I have to do something very strong on stage to reach these images.

Choreographic Practice I: Thomas Lehmen

Schreibstück is a choreographic experiment in which Thomas Lehmen acts as the "author" of a dance script that is presented to three choreographers to interpret. The premiere in Berlin in 2002 involved the choreographers Mart Kangro (Tallinn), Martin Nachbar (Berlin) and Sónia Baptista (Lisbon). A version of *Schreibstück* was performed at the Springdance Festival in Utrecht 21-22 April 2003 after the mini-conference. *Schreibstück* is also available as a book, and more information can be found on line at / <http://www.thomaslehmen.de/>

TL / When I started touring with my pieces through different countries, I did workshops with people. Then I got the idea it might be interesting to have one piece, but different people doing it to see their cultural specific-ness, how they would do something. To show differences, to show how people work, and how people react to things. For example, working with the people in Estonia, everything I said meant something completely else for them. There were a few people before me who worked with them and another vocabulary was established. Only after we agreed on a vocabulary, we could somehow work. But this takes weeks and months, years to do that. I had the idea to write down a piece and hand it out to several choreographers in different countries and let them do that. I found out it should be in a book form, I never should do it and there should be three groups simultaneously on stage.

I wrote the book and I sent them this box. In it are all the utensils they need to do the piece. They got this box by post with a contract and a return envelope for the contract. There is a measure tape, a tape to mark the space, a stopwatch and a pen to write their names on white T-shirts. And there is the book with all the instructions, with some text by me, Mårten Spångberg and Gerald Siegmund, and there are some general instructions, the tasks for this piece, all of it in two languages. There is the score. They have everything they need to do the piece. Maybe I'll give a demonstration now. Usually the space is white, with a white backdrop. About here there would be a line of nine points you need to fix. One very simple way to organize three groups in one space is to make a canon. I wrote down in the book that each group goes through the piece, from left to right, and has all these one-minute tasks. That means the first group comes in and they start with "disco." It's written down that

people should look at different disco dancers and take out some images. Three people stand out here and they dance. Each group has three people. After one minute with the stopwatch, they move further over because each point represents three minutes. Then they have the task of explaining the piece, one of them comes forward and explains the piece. It's another minute. Then there's a five second break, then they continue. Then there's "fucking." They make movements of fucking, some people fuck like this, and some on the floor, and some people do it like that. Then one person marks the themes, which usually means that one person walks past, and is making very short excerpts of the movements they find out for all these tasks.

Each point represents three minutes, each minute has a theme, and the group goes through section A, and when they are finished, they move on to section B. This means that the second group comes in at this moment and does all the themes of section A. They walk parallel through this canon. When group one is finished with section B, they move to section C, the second group moves from section A to section B. That means the third group comes in and moves and starts into section A. That means we have three groups now, parallel in time, going through the piece. The audience has the score in their hands, so they can always follow who is where. When group one is finished with the whole piece, they get off the stage. They walk everything through until the last group is alone on stage, finishes the piece, they leave, the piece is finished. There are certain themes that come back and they do them simultaneously, all the three groups do fucking at the same time, all the three do working, all the three do dying. Because I thought if people have something in common, then it's probably these basic human functions everybody has to do in life and in between are all the other themes which I felt are relevant to show a certain kind of reflexivity.

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HO / In order to localize the reflection within this piece... I discern three levels of reflection, the preparatory reflection – you have to find a language to communicate to the dancers what's the space in which they can operate; the second reflection is the spectator reflection, in the sense that we look at things and within the medium we can make differences, oppositions, repetitions, sequences, and so on. And something happens up here. But once you want to communicate what happens up here, you need another reflection. So that's the third one.

MK / But these three levels of reflection are present in any performance. I think we have to talk about what's the difference.

TL / Of course there is always a concept and there are always these three kinds of reflection on it. But how transparent are they and how much are the people conscious of these levels. For this piece I wanted to have it very transparent, to make the role of the unspoken clear, maybe the metaphysical communication. This is also the reason why I wanted to write a book and I never wanted to do the piece myself. It is very risky. I give only the score, I give the book, and then it's interpretation. From that moment on I cannot do anything about what they do. In the rehearsal process you often work and make decisions and dream this and that and the next morning you say something like that. You still don't know why you say that. I wanted to give that a clear place.

MK / Do you want to get rid of the interpretation?

TL / No, I wanted to see these different choreographers work on the interpretation, and I gave them such a strong form because I thought they had to do it in friction with a very clear score. When I thought about other scores from the past, for example those of John Cage, it occurred to me that different questions arose at that time. I think these are not really relevant any more for us at the moment. So what information can we afford to pass on? I think it is very important today to make decisions. If I do something else than what is expected of me, then I have to know why and I have to know in what form I do it, and I have to do it because I want it.

HO / I would like some more information, the three groups, are they from different cultures, Estonian, French, German? Or are they all Estonian?

TL / The first version I produced, the three were from Estonia, Germany and Portugal.

HO / And what you see is cultural differences and interpretation and values that are put into play indirectly – that's what you communicate, in a sense.

TL / Yes, but the funny thing is, it is very difficult for me to give answers. Because for me as the author it is very horrible to see what people do. Not because I don't think it's good what they do but this difference freaks me completely out and I have to shut up and maybe better not be at the shows.

HO / Because you want to get involved?

TL / Because I am so involved, but I cannot. That's the horrible thing.

HO / But you did an interesting thing, of course. Because the whole thing can only...it only works when in a sense there is a universal language. You choose basic human needs – everybody fucks.

TL / I thought OK, if there is something which people share, then what is that? The cultural images, people don't share necessarily.

HO / But you assume that the audience could recognise what they were doing. Otherwise it's just a gesture. It had to be recognisable, in a sense, in order to reflect upon the three different groups, like eating, dying.

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TL / Yes, this is what happens, because I lined them up, so you can compare. But it's not about comparing to find out who is doing it more interesting or better. You can only get to the secret of what really connects people if you don't do that any more. I think this is why everybody has to wear white T-shirts and write their name on it, and that's it. People seem the same, but they are not ... if you look, and you compare, you can find similarities and differences, not necessarily there where you expect them. Because, yes, people do fuck everywhere the same, and this is maybe what you could expect, but it also shows in the little details. The timer is really important. The Estonians were so sharp on time that they freaked everybody else out. And they were very clear. So how people do these little things shows much more. How they go from one to the other, this is why I wanted the five seconds break in it where they don't have to do anything. Going from one to the other, it shows a lot. You have to read it, there's the other reflection, the second one. During the show the audience has to read what they do. You see five minutes and you know this goes on until the end. This probably will not really change. Until now no one did a real structural change, which could be also part of interpretation. Until now they all continued through and even though the people seem to be the same, you see the differences in the detail, and it comes through but not in the action. I'm not so interested in product-oriented artwork. I think the process of watching it, and the process of doing it - is what people can really share. If I show my art product, it might be an interesting idea but I think I am not that interested in that.

VD / But your process is writing a book, your product is a book. It gives birth to a process.

TL / That is true but I think that watching a performance, you create reality, this means bringing itself in relation to something. And while I relate who and how I am, there is a process going on. And this is possibly where the audience can get in, and get connected with it, whatever happens.

HO / The audience is active in the sense that they have the score? And can intervene? Mentally they can think about it.

TL / Audiences can start to understand the ways in which it is done and what it is connected with. They start to make connections. And that is what I am interested in.

Choreographic Practice II: Raimund Hoghe

RH / To speak about the working process, it is important how different people work. I try to have a very relaxed atmosphere during creation so when we meet first we have tea together, or play some music, warm up. Peter Brook once said you have to create an atmosphere for things to happen. I need a relaxed atmosphere, so that I don't feel pressured or judged. When I work with people I don't judge them. Sometimes it's difficult because people don't trust what they feel or think. They want to have a judgment – that's good, that's bad, and I can't work under these circumstances. I feel people become freer when I don't judge them. Later I will select, I'm the director, but not immediately because otherwise we are not open. I like to work in an empty space and mostly in a black box, therefore I don't work with video, or with video artists. I work with the simplicity of the black box, and therefore I want to change this space a little bit. I wanted to ask you, when I do the lecture performance, to sit here, on the floor, because otherwise you have all this other information. In a way I couldn't see Thomas because of all this (indicating audience, video, etc.). When you work in an empty space you don't have so many things to look at, and then when one person is alone on stage there is not so much to see, then something happens for the audience. You start to think about yourself or your perspective. It's not mine, they can think what they want. The performances are two hours or more and during this time something happens. It's only a little part from a solo piece *Lettere Amoroze*, and I did this part also in a lecture performance. This lecture performance is with scenes from five different pieces and I do it because sometimes there is not the space or the money to present a solo. But in the lecture performance I can react to the space. They are the original scenes but I present just ten minutes from different pieces. It was interesting for me to see how it works, to take something out of the context, because people say, "can't you do a shorter performance?" Audiences are used to one hour, one and half, not more, so can't you do short pieces?

You always work in a market, therefore what Marianne said in the beginning, was important for me. There is a big pressure now in a lot of countries for programmers to have more audience. But I feel I have to do this. You can write a poem or a novel, three hundred pages, one page, two sentences, and you cannot compare it. Everything has a right to be. I do it my way, other people do it their way and it's okay. I only want that different things can exist and if I have to make a compromise and do it shorter so it's better to sell, I won't do it. Maybe you can sit for ten minutes on the floor.

People adjust in the space, come to the front of the tables. Hoghe begins to explain what the frame for the work is.

RH / I am normally in black because it's a black space. And normally it's much darker than here. Sometimes people think I'm not there any more. I talk about personal things but there is also the distance, normally you would be further away. Then you have more space for yourself. In order to connect the lines - like in the Japanese paintings, between the points, that is the important space, not the points themselves. I always try to create something of the space with very simple things.

The lecture performance lasts 12 minutes

Question From Audience / What do you see while you perform this?

RH / I see the objects, I see the black space around, I don't see the audience. I know how it looks because I watched the video. I am very aware of how it looks. So, then in the performance I don't have to be aware of how it will look. I know.

HO / I taught sword fighting for a long time. The whole aesthetics of the Buddhist philosophy is based on the fact that you are not the initiator of your movements. This gives you a completely different entrance to think about reflexivity, another aspect of reflexivity, a kind of bodily reflexivity. Thomas made that remark at the end of his comment that our way of thinking about consciousness is meta, meta, meta, of course this Cartesian idea of a body and a mind lacks completely in your performance. The reflexivity within these kinds of performances or the reflexivity within Japanese aesthetics is beyond the dichotomy of the body and mind. So what kind of reflexivity is it? We cannot approach this on the level of the consciousness. We have to approach this on a different level. Perhaps we can just approach this performance not by the consciousness but by the awareness that is engendered in these kind of performances. What does this eventually give us for reflection? What is

the reflection that is connected to awareness that is not completely the consciousness and it's not the unconsciousness either, it is something else. It is an environmental reflection that has to have its connection to reality. But what is the connection to reality in this kind of a performance?

RH / Like the tea master in the tea ceremony - for me there is no difference between choreography and what the tea master does. I really look at the tea master to learn how to work with objects. For this you need a distance to yourself. You have this in a lot of cultures, more than here in our culture.

HO / We try not to distance ourselves, so reflexivity is seeking ourselves. So this is a completely different reflection.

RH / Yes, the observer and observed.

HO / Yes, subject/ object relation, in a more technical sense. And I find it quite intriguing how, for instance, Butoh dance works compared to this relationship. But this subject/object relation creates a kind of reflection, which we are not able to connect with in a sense. I think that to be connected with this bodily awareness opens up another reflective layer. Especially in the performance arts...

VD / For me the work of Hoghe does not consist of just adding poetic moments that expire when they are finished. It's clearly a vision of representation that includes the poetic but there's also a lot of emerging questions about what representation is, the time, what is the relation to Hoghe and to me in terms of being the observer. Hoghe deals with his personal memories but his use of representation in theatre and time makes you connect also to your own memory. This has nothing to do with Hoghe, he has his stories, his generation, but his theatre gives you time to connect with your own emotion and memory, so it's almost self-reflexive. It's not only the body movements you have to watch, it's also very much about reflecting on your own emotions.

RH / There is one image, I am laying down in the very back, on the ground. Vincent comes, watches me from the middle of the stage, the audience watches Vincent watching me, and I also watch. There is a black curtain in front of me but I see something, I am not blind. And there is a long song, and there's text in the song, then there is a singer, you have the story of the singer, if you know the singer. The texts are very important to me. So there is this watching. It's not so personal, there is something personal behind, but it's not important. It's not important what he is thinking, or what I am thinking.

HO / Thomas can you recognise your performance in this performance? In a structural sense as well?

TL / Yes and no. An artist makes a choice to do it with three cups out of paper, another artist makes the choice "I'll use my memory." Another artist makes the choice "I'll work with people from Japan and from Berlin." And there is a funny kind of universality there, but as soon as I want to give the names, then I fuck up. If I give the name all the misunderstanding will come up. What is not possible to talk about, is in fact the thing what everything is about. So of course I can see my thinking, I can see in Hoghe's piece, because something is happening in between, he cannot really name it. And also like in the *Schreibstück*, there are a lot of words about it and people do write about it, and I speak about it, and all this is of course not the piece.

MK / That's what I would call poetics, the thing you can't talk about.

HO / Okay, but how do we connect with those poetics? That's a kind of reflexivity as well. Why do we talk about all these different media? I think about video, or a live performance, or literature, or architecture, or whatever art form you take, has its own specific sensibility and sensitivity, and that appeals to us in a very specific way. So it's nonsense that video is the same as theatre.

MK / But there are things, which are connected.

HO / Yes, OK, but that's different. What I want to find out is how the connection of this sensitivity happens on the level of reception. How can one sensitivity strengthen and enhance another sensitivity? And that's a very subtle thing, and for the maker of the piece, you think about your audience. You are not mono-maniac, in the sense, "I don't care about the audience, I want to do my thing." You think about the complete... all the sensitivities that you trigger, for instance in the different languages. So every media has its own medium-specific sensitivity, and its own medium-specific reflexivity.

MK / Sitting in the audience and looking at a performance in which different media are used, as a spectator, I cannot cut loose my reflexivity, of my emotions, of my memory, etc. That's a whole for me, and in the act of creating that's true also. When I write an article I really can be ill with it, really bodily ill if it doesn't work.

HO / But we are talking about research, not about the moment we are all in the thing. Of course that's undividable, it's one big thing, and the more you are sucked into it the better it is. But there's a moment that you get back, and that's what we are talking about, about this moment for the maker, and this moment for the receiver. Their reflexivity becomes communicative and then the sensibilities start working in a different way.

RH / Hooman Sharifi asked about the young people... I made a kind of an audition. I asked them to do things from the pieces. Most of them were untrained. To me it was more the personality, and how they behaved. There were also professional dancers and you didn't see a difference on stage. They do it very, very good. They all worked with the music and some innocence, I call it innocence. And they have kept something for themselves that a lot of people have lost, and this is what I like a lot to see on stage. You see something that you cannot buy. I didn't look for extraordinary looking people. Like the person who looked the poorest on stage comes from a very rich family. I didn't understand, then I saw a scar on his body, a very big one, and then I could understand a lot of his things. But I didn't bring him on stage because I saw a scar before. It brings something. There is something about why people come to theatre... I come from a very poor family, my mother didn't have much money. She went to theatre, she fought for the right to have another life than what the society wanted for her. Therefore I was growing up fighting against this role, also in my situation, for the disability you have to be in this position. If you are a bit more intelligent, you can be a journalist. There are not many journalists with a disability; also on stage you don't see them. We don't talk about all that you don't see on stage, all the people who are excluded from stage, someone like Hooman Sharifi is also a sensation. And it's the same therefore, we feel connected. I am a sensation. I take my shirt off, something completely different. People react and they say, it's so terrible to see it. And what is it? They see a body and they can watch all this on TV without any problem. But this is a big shock that I take my T-shirt off. Like with Vincent for example. He has not the body of a normal dancer. A lot of people don't see their qualities, artistic qualities. Vincent could stand next to them and you would see that they do it with the same attention and ... he has another education. You look for the roots of theatre. That is my interest. I just wanted not special looking people. Then you discover something on stage, because you put them out of the context, like the object, and then you discover you don't see the age. In a way someone has it with thirty, or thirty-three even, someone lost it with sixteen this so-called youth, because it is about time passing. That really counts for me, what you see on stage, and what you feel is some strength.

Choreographic Practice III: Vincent Dunoyer

VD / I would just like to start by saying that I find it extremely difficult to talk about my own work because I don't really know what my own work is. My work is about trying to understand what my work is, as a person, as a choreographer who performs on stage. It's like trying to answer questions about what I do, what I am trying to present. And this takes the form of dance pieces. And I find it quite odd to try to explain it in language. I think the best explanation of my work would be my work. I don't consider it one work. It is somehow an infinite research.

I feel the need to talk about what I did before. I was mostly a dancer with big companies, and mostly with the Rosas, I danced for six years with them. A very classical company structure, working mostly on very structured choreographies, with a very strong relation to music. Then when I left the company I started wondering what I was going to do. But I didn't feel the need to choreograph myself. I was sort afraid to do this, to speak under my own name. I decided to ask three choreographers to write a solo for me. I asked Steve Paxton, Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker and the Wooster Group to create a solo for me and I

would gather them and make an evening out of them. It gave birth to my first personal show, which was *3 Solos for Vincent*. It was my show, it was my concept and my proposal but at the same time I didn't write the dance. I was dancing Steve Paxton, I was dancing Anne Teresa and I was dancing the Wooster Group. But that was for me the matrix of all my development after this.

After this show I created my first personal "work." I didn't dare to go on stage with my own work so I did a choreographic installation, with computers and slide machines projecting images of myself. And then I created the first solo called *Vanity*. After this I did another solo called *The Princes Project*. And now I am in the middle of doing a new creation called *Solos for Others*. I've started implementing people other than myself in the working process and I find it interesting because in a way there are some similarities with what Thomas did with his new production. I was looking for producing a catalogue that I could give to people. And that these people would do what this catalogue told them. But it's exclusively based on images of myself. To do this new creation for other people I considered my work in solo since '97 and all my personal work has been dealing with images. I started using image to comment on what this moment and this reality of dancing on stage was. And I needed some kind of other media to understand or reflect on the moment when I was dancing on stage. For example, for the dancing of *Vanity*, I was interested to work with two frames. The frame of the stage and I was dancing with a very small video camera. It was like a choreography but with a little camera. After I leave the stage, the movie of my dance was projected. I was interested to confront the reality of the choreography in the time of the performance and the memory of this choreography when I'm gone.

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For *The Princes Project* I was interested in making a duet with a female partner. We started to work on the idea of the "pas de deux" but at one point she had to leave because she was pregnant. Instead of trying to find a new woman to dance with me I decided to create a solo out of this absence, and then to implement the images into my choreographic process. I decided to reconsider all my solo work since '97 and take 99 images, photographs from it. Knowing that this solo work is not only my work, it's also Steve Paxton's work, it's the Wooster Group work, it's Anne Teresa's work. It's not about me. These pictures are images of me, but there is no original sense that I represent. I am not the model of something. I'm just doing movement and gestures. And I was interested to pass these images to another dancer.

It's interesting to me what Thomas is doing with language, because obviously he has decided to write a written score with very precise words. I was not in favour of using language in the process of dealing with another dancer. Somehow I wanted to put him in the position that was mine. For example, when I did the Steve Paxton solo, watched the video of Steve Paxton for days, trying to reproduce his movements. My work was basically to copy images and to understand from the images what was the inner sensation and nature of the dance. I decided to pass the images to the dancer and that he would just have to watch the images very closely and try to reproduce them in a very simple way. I think the show is going to be called *Solos for Others* and I want to have a very clear structure. I want a dancer other than me to perform all the photographs, the photographs being still movements, but these photographs are shown to the person on stage, and he just watches the image and he does it. The person who shows the images does it in a certain rhythm. Then I want the same exercise reversed. I do the images again, images of myself and the person, the dancer, shows the images to me. I want two dancers doing exactly the same score, but obviously in a very personal way. Even if the photos and the movements are very precise. It's a mix between improvisation, because you don't know how you are doing it, or what you are going to do in between two photos, so it's very personal. At the same time it's a very strict and precise dance exercise.

MK / It's perhaps important to say that the person showing the pictures doesn't see the pictures either.

VD / No. The dispositive is very simple. If I have a dancer in front of me and the audience is there, I have the pictures with me and I am looking at the dancer. Of course I know all the pictures, and the dancer knows all the pictures. The dancer looks at one picture, and I look at him. The rhythm of the choreography is decided actually in between us. At the same time there is a live piano player performing Beethoven. We have an open score but we are trying to make links between the actual action and the listening to the music. It's totally about what's happening at the moment.

In short, all my work before was very structured, very mental, it was very precise and I felt the need to open it up a bit. I tried to find the concept of the score that would be very precise but at the same time it would allow certain freedom. So, it's a research. I can do the exercise, but since we didn't prepare I will ask Hoghe to show the photos although he doesn't know them.

Dunoyer gives instructions to Hoghe how to show the pictures. The presentation lasts about 13 min.

Then everyone returns to chairs.

VD / Earlier, I was concerned with trying to make nice movements and choreography, a nice rhythm and structure. For this show, I tried to question what beautiful movements or a beautiful rhythm would mean. That's why I decided to have 99 movements, which are not beautiful in themselves. They could be interesting or silly or neutral. I wanted to put them on the same basis and not to decide somehow. To make them appear for what they are in terms of movements and images and nothing more. I was interested in what was happening between the images. I wanted to get free from the decision to decide what is effective or beautiful although the choice of the photographs was very conscious. The following order is totally open, it changes every night. I just take the pack and I start to show.

TL / But why did you choose these movements and this certain aesthetic?

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VD / All the movements come from my former work, I decided to do a session with a photographer. A very free one, not thinking about what we were going to shoot. She had a camera on a tripod and she shot maybe 150 photographs and I decided to keep 99 out of them.

MK / You did it in Ghent with Etienne Guilloteau. I found the difference between you and Guilloteau in the fact that he really tried to imitate the photos as best as possible. In your version the movements were more linked in one way or another. With you I saw also elements of interpretation, which perhaps are still connected to how you did the movement in your previous work, which is a memory that he does not have. So is this on purpose?

VD / I was interested to work with a young dancer with not much stage experience. And in a way he is being very honest with what the task is, which is watching an image, trying to feel the image with his own body and somehow giving it to be seen to people. I like the fact that these images are just images for him. It could be any image. It's me but it doesn't make sense. It's just a body doing something. For me it relates to my own history and to my own memory, while doing it I'm recovering sensations that I lived in other contexts. He has a focus on the images and within these images I have a focus on work that was done before, other contexts or histories, so sometimes I think of Steve Paxton or the Wooster Group, or about myself four years ago. It's a gap between me and the other one. The title is *Solos for Others* – "others" is also me, because me doing these photographs of myself today in this context has nothing to do with what I was doing four years ago.

MK / I think what you are doing is a kind of a reconstruction. By reconstructing, it becomes something else. One can say that it's the same way that Gerhard Bohner took the pictures of the Triadic Ballet and tried to imagine, to feel in his body, what the movements could have been in between and with the help of descriptions. It could be a way of reconstructing the past material.

HO / Marianne van Kerkhoven, are you prepared to use the word reflection for this kind of thing?

MK / Well, it's very difficult for me to tear apart reflection from feeling. Perhaps for the people who have to look at your photos without this background, it's more a kind of reflecting how to make the exact copy of it. Whereas for Vincent it's so intermingled with the memory he has in his body, with the context around these dances... I don't see the difference between a reflecting body or a thinking body. Do you?

HO / No, I think it's the same because the word reflection has so many consciousness related overtones. We are not prepared to use this word for this specific experience. But once an experience is layered and you are aware of this complex

layering, I am prepared to use the word reflectivity. Which is a very minimal way of using it but it opens up this conscious focus. I am always interested when you compare the sensibilities for instance, between dance and architecture. When you look at these broken up sequences, the first connotation I have is Muybridge, the guy who made the cinematographs, do the horses come with their feet off the ground or don't they...

VD / But Muybridge worked more on the analysis of different movements throughout different stills...

HO / Yes, but it's just an association I have. It means I have a visual art association and not a dance association. Just to show that it's a layered experience...

MK / I remember talking with Cesc Gelabert who reproduced a choreography of Gerhard Bohner and he said he looked for the same material of his clothes, the same leather of his shoes, to get as close as possible to the sensation he must have had. So another layer is imagination. You have to imagine what it was...

VD / Yes, for me this is important. When you show an image to another dancer, you can tell him, "Do what you see," but at the same time he has another body. What is this movement for you or what is this movement when you are doing it? What are you imagining? If I do this, I remember I did it, but for him, what he is imagining is almost as doing a new movement. I wanted him not to interpret or to make it personal but to trigger his imagination and his sensibility and his feeling about what these movements were.

HO / What does it mean for research, this kind of transformation of your dance? Is this a way of getting to another level of dance? You said something very paradoxical, that your work is trying to find out what your work is. It means that you don't know yet what you are doing and by doing it you will know what you have done. Which is a tautology. But it's very interesting because in a way you formulated the criterion for research.

VD / I don't understand the word research. When you create a dance piece are you doing research?

HO / For instance, was your reading of the biography of Beethoven part of the research? That must be a part of it. Did you have a concept in advance or did a concept slowly grow out of the possibilities and one possibility becomes actual. That's the bricolage way, a heuristic way of getting into this form that you created.

VD / Exactly, like when we start working with Raimund, he doesn't know what he wants to get so we somehow don't know what we're doing. It's like we just put the music on and see what happens. It's always a research for...

RH / ... something unconscious. I know what I'm looking for and it's unconscious. Until I find it in a person. He is maybe not aware of this moment, then I see something and – there, I saw it. And it became conscious then, what I'm looking for. I am very moved by it. There is a desire there, there is a reason to create, otherwise we wouldn't need and wouldn't create.

VD / Why do we go to a studio to make a work? There must be a strong reason to get the work done even though it can be anything. But the research is always a process.

HO / I'm trying to locate the element of concept, or conceptuality, or reflectivity. It's this bodily reflectiveness that connects you to every phase that you have to go through. I understand that there is an unconscious, or not conscious, drive. But your body is performed. There is a format - you are the format. So this drive gets into this format, but in this, the expressive power there are... the decisions are made. This not, and this I will do. The criterion for doing things could be not conscious and could become conscious the moment you do it. Does this mean that the whole category of reflection is not applicable to this situation? Or do we have to change this whole category of reflection by taking it into the body? That's the final point I am trying to make. Getting beyond this body/ mind thing, this conscious/unconscious thing, and getting into a category that surpasses this hard opposition. It has to do with what I think we used to call skill. Skill is a reflection where you know what you are doing without consciously being there and controlling it.

MK / I would rather call it intuition.

HO / I don't want to call it intuition. I would define intuition as something that has been forgotten. I think you end up in a kind of a metaphysical thing, thinking about the creative process, and I think it's more materialistic. You can call it gut feeling.

MK / No, I would call intuition a kind of unconscious intelligence...

TL / Undiscursive... just doing it... then we cannot talk about it.

HO / Okay, unconscious intelligence. Once we start thinking about these kinds of elements within the creative process, somewhere this reflectivity pops up again.

MK / But it IS there, it IS in the body! It is always there...

HO / I know it's there, something is there.

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TL / What is the artist doing, is he doing something out of one area into another area? Then the artist is a medium. When you do the show it's a medium for something. So you bring up something else. You always have to do with a transition out of another area, into another area. That is already an incredibly creative act. What Vincent is doing is a very complex thing. It's incredibly complex and of course it has to do with areas we are not able to talk about.

HO / No, I am not that esoteric about it.

TL / Can you talk about it? We are talking about it all the time... but can you.

HO / Of course we are talking about it, we do it all the time. Where we can get it in talking about it, that's a different thing. Perhaps we create this other realm that you are talking about by installing the idea that we can't get a grip on it. And only this idea suggests that it must be that vast there, that it must be something in itself, and then we have two worlds.

About the Contributors

Vincent Dunoyer

Vincent Dunoyer (1962, Paris) started his dance studies - both classical and contemporary - after high school. In 1989 he worked with Philippe Découflé for the street pageant performed during the 200th anniversary celebrations of the French Revolution. The same year, he was engaged by Wim Vandekeybus' company where he joined the cast of *Les Porteuses de Mauvaises Nouvelles* and participated in the creation of *Le Poids de la Main*. In 1990 Vincent Dunoyer joined Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's *Rosas*. Between 1990 and 1996 he participated in the creation of *Achterland*, *ERTS*, *Mozart/Concert Arias*, *Toccatà* and the movie *Achterland*. His first encounter with members of the Wooster Group took place in 1994, when he replaced a member of the cast of their production *Fish Story*. After meeting Steve Paxton, Vincent Dunoyer started working on a solo with him. These encounters resulted in the production *Wooster Group / De Keersmaeker / Paxton*, 3 solos for Vincent Dunoyer, premiered at the Springdance Festival in Utrecht in 1997 (international tour until February 2000). In the beginning of 1999, he conceived *Etude#31*, an installation for 9 slide-projectors and a computer, with the photographer Mirjam Devriendt, on a study for mechanical piano composed by Conlon Nancarrow. This mechanical solo was premiered at the 99 edition of the Springdance festival, then shown throughout Europe. During a residence at Künstlerhaus Mousonturm in 1999, he created *Vanity*, a solo for a dancer, a percussionist, a video camera and a tape-delay system, on a music by James Tenney. His new solo *The Princess Project* an interrogation on the idea of duo dance premiered on February 2001 in Künstlerhaus Mousonturm. Vincent Dunoyer also teaches *Rosas* repertory at P.A.R.T.S., the School of Anna Teresa De Keersmaeker.

Raimund Hoghe

Raimund Hoghe was born in Wuppertal and began his career by writing profiles of outsiders and celebrities for the German weekly newspaper "Die Zeit". These were later compiled in several books. Since 1989 he has been working on his own theatre pieces for various dancers and actors. In 1994 he produced his first solo for himself, *Meinwärts*, which together with the subsequent *Chambre séparée* (1997) and *Another Dream* (2000) made up a trilogy on the 20th century. From 1980-90, he worked as dramaturg for Pina Bausch's *Tanztheater Wuppertal*, which also became the subject matter for two more books. Hoghe frequently works for television on projects such as *Der Buckel*, his 1997 hour-long self-portrait for WDR (West German Radio and Television). His books have been translated into several languages and he has given guest performances in numerous countries in Europe and in Japan. He lives in Düsseldorf and has been awarded several prizes including the "Deutscher Produzentenpreis für Choreografie" in 2001. In 2002, he created the trio *Sarah, Vincent et moi*, in collaboration with Sarah Chase and Vincent Dunoyer. For *Brugge 2002* and the *Kaaitheater* in Brussels he made his first big group piece, *Young People, Old Voices*. It will be presented at the SpringDance Festival in Utrecht 17 April 2003.

Thomas Lehmen

Thomas Lehmen (1963, Oberhausen) attended the School for New Dance Development in Amsterdam from 1986-1990, where in addition to dance he pursued interests in music and kung fu. During his training, he soon took charge of the concept, choreography, and music composition for various solo, duet and group pieces. Since 1990 he has been living in Berlin and working as a dancer, choreographer, theater and film performer, light designer, teacher, and carpenter. After finishing his studies, Lehmen danced with Yoshiko Chuma, Pauline de Groot, Sasha Waltz & Guests, *Detektor*, Mark Tompkins, and others. In 1997, he created his first solo, *Extended Version*, followed by 3 other solo pieces: *Friendly Fire* and *No Fear* in 1998, and *Distanzlos* in 2000, presented in Brazil and in Europe. In 2001, Lehmen developed a group piece *Mono Subjects* during temporary residencies at Künstlerhaus Mousonturm in Frankfurt/Main and *Kampnagel* in Hamburg. In *Mono Subjects*, Lehmen grapples with basic questions such as the construction of dance and the relationship between the performer and the audience. This work was followed by two other pieces, *One to One* and *Clever*. All of Lehmen's performances show a concern with transcending conventional forms of dance performance and in questioning the roles of and communication between choreographer, performer and the audience. He has continued these explorations with the creation of *Schreibstück*, a new choreographic experiment in which Lehman acts as the "author" of a dance script that is presented to three choreographers to interpret. The premiere in Berlin in 2002, involved the choreographers Mart Kangro (Tallinn), Martin Nachbar (Berlin) and Sónia Baptista (Lisbon). *Schreibstück* will be performed at the SpringDance Festival in Utrecht 21-22 April 2003.

Marianne van Kerkhoven

Marianne van Kerkhoven (1946, Antwerp Belgium) studied Germanic Languages at the University of Brussels and worked as a dramaturge in the Royal Theatre in Antwerp. In 1970, she founded the theatre group "Het Trojaanse Paard" for which she wrote different plays. From 1976-1982 she worked on a theatre science project at the Brussels University. Since 1985, she has been the dramaturge of Kaaitheater (Brussels), working with Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker (Rosas), Jan Lauwers (Needcompany) and Jan Ritsema, and she is also currently the dramaturge for Het Net (Brugge). She was Chief Editor of Theaterschrift, an international journal (13 issues published between 1992 to 1998 in four languages) concerned with recent developments in the theatre and creating a bridge between theory and praxis. She has been editorial member of the theatre magazine Etcetera since its foundation in 1983 and published her first novel in 1990. In 2002, a collection of her essays on theatre were published in *Van het Kijken en van het schrijven: teksten over theatre*.

Henk Oosterling

Henk Oosterling (1952) studied Philosophy & Japanese language in RU Leiden (1982-1985) and received a master's degree in Philosophy at the Erasmus University Rotterdam (cum laude) in 1985 and PH.D (cum laude) in 1996. He is now associate professor at the Philosophy Department of The Erasmus University Rotterdam where he teaches dialectics, French contemporary thought and aesthetics. He has published widely on both non-philosophical as well as philosophical topics including several books such as *Het verdwijnen van de mens* (1985, on the subject in the work of Michel Foucault), *De opstand van het lichaam* (1989), *Door schijn bewogen. Naar een hyperkritiek van de xenofobe rede* (1996), and *Radicale middelmatigheid* (2000, on the information society). He published a book on the Theatre Group Hollandia *On the Border* in 2000 and is working on a few english books on intermediality and other philosophical themes to include transformance, informance and performance. As coordinator of the Center for Philosophy & Arts (CFK), he supervises the research programme 'Intermediality. Thinking between Philosophy, Arts and Politics' and is chief editor of *Interakta*; the series of publications established to make the results of the debates organised by the CFK available to the public (*Interakta #2* and *#4* were dedicated to themes related to performance practices).

Colophon

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